

---

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Paul Gipps, CAO

**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2025  
**Meeting Type:** Strategy Session

**Prepared by:** Brian Zurek, Manager of Long Range Planning  
**Department:** Planning and Development

**Title:** Official Community Plan Review and Update 2025 - 2026  
**Description:** Draft Strategic Policy Development and Workplan

---

### **STRATEGY SESSION OBJECTIVE**

Receive feedback from Council on the draft Official Community Plan review and update program.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Official Community Plan (OCP) sets the overall framework for land use planning and community development within the District of Lake Country. The plan is a product of public engagement and belongs to the entire community.

Following direction from Council, staff have begun the process to review and update the OCP. Staff propose the following guiding principles to direct the development of the OCP:

1. Build on successful policies in the existing OCP and other strategic documents,
2. Reduce, modify, or remove existing policies where appropriate,
3. Incorporate themes of Council's 2025 Strategic Plan and other District priorities,
4. Generate strong community engagement in the OCP review process, and
5. Develop a clear and coordinated vision to guide community building in the District over the next 25 years.

Council will act as the Steering Committee for the review. Staff has developed a workplan for the project which is scheduled to occur over approximately 18 months. Council will receive staff reports at key milestones of the project during each project phase. The formal adoption of the draft OCP is anticipated in July 2026. Council's draft 2025 budget includes \$250,000 in funding for the OCP review and update.

Staff have begun to develop a public engagement plan to inform the OCP review and update. Council will be asked to review the draft engagement plan at an upcoming meeting.

In addition to the general review and update, the District is required by the province through recent legislative updates (Bill 44) to ensure that the current OCP can accommodate the 20 year need for housing in the community. Staff have begun to evaluate the existing OCP, and anticipate bringing forward an amendment bylaw for Council's consideration in June 2025.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### The Official Community Plan

The OCP sets the overall framework for community development, including land use planning, parks and recreation, arts and culture, mobility networking, and infrastructure servicing within the District. The document provides strategic guidance (goals, objectives, and policies) for Council and staff in departments throughout the organization. The document is a product of public engagement, including visioning, consultation, and dialogue: the OCP belongs to the entire community, including residents and stakeholders.

As noted above, the OCP provides policy guidance. It is neither a regulatory document nor does it obligate Council to complete projects described in the Plan; however, the Local Government Act requires bylaws enacted by Council to be consistent with the OCP.

Council adopted the current OCP in 2019, which captured the vision for the growth and development of the community over 20 years (2018 – 2038). The current OCP includes the following guiding principles:

1. Preserve our rural and agricultural character.
2. Create a vibrant town centre.
3. Promote development in existing neighbourhoods.
4. Achieve sustainable development through smart growth.
5. Protect and enhance our natural environment.
6. Facilitate an active, healthy, inclusive community.
7. Maintain high-quality municipal services.

#### Why Review and Update the Plan?

The District has made progress toward many of its guiding principles. In keeping with best practice, there is a need to review the OCP to determine how effective the current policies have been, and if changes are needed to reflect current conditions and priorities.

The current OCP includes the current topic areas:

Environment & Sustainability	Infrastructure, Services and Utilities
Growth	Community & Social Considerations
Neighbourhood Planning	Urban Design, Form & Character
Economic Development	Future Land Use
Housing	Development Permit Areas & Approval Information
Transportation	Financing & Implementation

Council has directed staff to begin a general OCP review in 2025. The OCP review will allow the District to evaluate the existing policies in the context of the change experienced in the community since 2018 (population growth, increased development, housing affordability, environmental hazards, etc.) and associated key priorities (development approvals, provision of municipal services, economic diversification, community safety, etc.).

Staff proposes the general OCP update would build on the policies of the existing OCP, and focus on the following:

1. Review and evaluate existing policies and guidelines (for example, urban containment boundaries, future land use designations, Development Permit Areas),
2. Update the OCP to include the specific policy documents created since 2018 (for example, Water Master Plan, Liquid Waste Management Plan, Transportation Master Plan),
3. Fill information gaps with data generated through updated population demographic projections, housing needs assessments, and land capacity analyses,
4. Include new priorities into the District's strategic policy fabric (for example, Council's 2025 strategic priorities), and
5. Monitor progress towards the updated policy guidance.

In addition to the general review, the District must update the OCP in 2025 to comply with the Local Government Act (Bill 44) legislation. The Bill 44 update of the OCP will be limited to: ensuring that the 20 year need for housing can be accommodated by the future land use designations supporting residential housing, and including housing policies for each class of housing need described in the District 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report. Staff anticipate that the OCP amendments required to comply with Bill 44 legislation will be presented for Council's consideration this summer (2025).

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### Guiding Principles

Staff have prepared a set of draft guiding principles to direct the strategic policy review. The draft principles are listed below:

1. Build on successful policies in the existing OCP and other strategic documents,
2. Reduce, modify, or remove existing policies where appropriate,
3. Incorporate themes of Council's 2025 Strategic Plan and other District priorities,
4. Generate strong community engagement in the OCP review process, and
5. Develop a clear and coordinated vision to guide community building in the District over the next 25 years.

Subject to direction from Council, staff will further develop the guiding principles in the background phase of the workplan.

### Project Workplan

Staff have drafted a workplan for the OCP review and update (Attachment A). The workplan divides the project into five phases occurring over approximately 18 months as described below:

1. Background + Visioning: January – September 2025,
2. Community Development Options: October – December 2025,
3. Developing the Plan: January – March 2026,
4. Refining the Plan: April - June 2026, and
5. Adopting the Plan: July 2026.

Staff recognize that the target timeline may need adjustment due to unanticipated challenges or unscheduled events; however, Council will be provided with regular progress updates, results at key milestones, and recommendations on workplan changes, if required.

### Role for Council

Council will act as the Steering Committee for the OCP review and update. Staff will request Council endorsement of a terms of reference for the project and other key process documents, including the public engagement plan. Council can expect to receive a staff report at key milestones of the project, including the kickoff to or completion of each stage of the workplan. At the conclusion of the OCP review and update process, staff will return to Council to begin the formal adoption of the draft OCP anticipated in July 2026.

### Project Team

The review and update of the OCP will be led by Planning Department staff and overseen by the Senior Leadership Team. Both the Planning Department staff and the Senior Leadership Team will meet throughout the process to manage each phase of the workplan.

Staff have already begun the background stage of the OCP review and update process. Activities completed or underway include meetings with interdepartmental staff, discussions with external consultants regarding background document preparation (public engagement, land capacity analysis, etc.), coordinating grant funding applications, and project research.

### Project Budget

The District's draft 2025 budget includes \$250,000 for the OCP review and update. As noted previously, staff are seeking additional funding through project grants where available. Staff will provide updates to Council throughout the OCP review and update process regarding project resources and budgeting.

### Public Engagement

Public engagement is key to developing effective strategic guidance for the District. Strong public engagement is a guiding principle for the OCP review and update process. The District will complete the following to develop the engagement plan:

- Contract an engagement consultant to help define and support the process,

- Include interdepartmental staff with experience engaging with community partners to develop the plan,
- Create a process that is thoughtful, comprehensive, and effective,
- Incorporate District staff into the delivery of the plan to strengthen community connections and manage project expenses, and
- Review the engagement plan with Council prior to project kickoff.

Staff are in discussions with engagement consultants to develop a plan for public engagement. Council will have opportunity to review the draft plan during an upcoming Council meeting.

Bill 44 OCP Update Required December 31, 2025

Council adopted the District's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report on December 17, 2024. The Interim Report estimates housing need along the housing continuum. The District is required to review and update the OCP to ensure that the 20 year need for housing can be accommodated in the community.

The District is also required to incorporate housing policies into the OCP to promote the delivery of each class of housing identified in the interim report:

- A. Extreme Core Housing Need
- B. Persons Experiencing Homelessness
- C. Suppressed Household Formation
- D. Anticipated Growth
- E. Rental Vancy Rate Adjustment
- F. Additional Local Demand

The province requires municipal governments to complete this work by December 31, 2025.

Staff have begun evaluating the OCP in the context of the 20 year need for housing. Preliminary results indicate that the District has sufficient land designated for residential development (High Density Residential, Urban Residential, Rural Residential, Mixed Use Commercial) to accommodate 5,162 housing units with current land use designations.

Staff anticipate bringing forward an associated OCP amendment bylaw for Council's consideration in the summer (2025). Staff will provide Council with an update on draft Bill 44 OCP amendments prior to introduction of a forthcoming amendment bylaw.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Brian Zurek, Manager of Long Range Planning**

---

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	Official Community Plan Review and Update .docx
Attachments:	- ATTACHMENT A - Lake Country 2025 Workplan.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 27, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Jeremy Frick, Director of Development Approvals - Feb 26, 2025 - 3:50 PM**

**Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services - Feb 27, 2025 - 8:56 AM**

**Task assigned to Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer was completed by workflow administrator Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services**

**Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer - Feb 27, 2025 - 10:47 AM**

**Makayla Ablitt, Legislative & FOI Coordinator - Feb 27, 2025 - 11:27 AM**